

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 PC-01 SCCT-01 DHA-02 A-01

OPR-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 SY-05 /071 W
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O R 032036Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 526

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORTS OF FURTHER VIOLENCE IN OLANCHO

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2809

1. CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA AND LIBERAL TIEMPO CARRIED FRONT PAGE STORIES ABOUT TERRORISM IN THE DEPARTMENT OF OLANCHO. BOTH STORIES STATE THAT THE AIRSTRIP AT THE TOWN OF CATACAMAS HAD BEEN DYNAMITED, A BRIDGE OUTSIDE THE TOWN BLOWN-UP, TELEPHONE LINES CUT AND THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE OLANCHO CATTLEMEN AND LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION (AGAO) HAD BEEN SET ON FIRE ON JULY 1. LA PRENSA STATED THAT, "IT IS SAID 600 MEN, SOME ARMED, HAVE TAKEN TO THE HILLS". BOTH PAPERS SPECULATED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT GUERRILLA GROUPS WERE OPERATING IN OLANCHO. SIMILAR STORIES WERE CARRIED ON VARIOUS RADIO STATIONS.

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2. G-2 LT. COLONEL BODDEN INFORMED EMBASSY THAT PRESS REPORTS ABOUT SITUATION IN OLANCHO HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED. HE SAID THERE IS NO ARMED GUERRILLA MOVEMENT BUT RATHER DISGRUNTLED CAMPESINOS WHO ARE REACTING TO THE STOPPING OF THE

HUNGER MARCH AND THE EVENTS IN JUTICALPA. HE SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN TROUBLE BUT, HAT IT HAS BEEN RELATIVELY MINOR AND SEEMS TO BE DIRECTED AT FRIGHTENING PEOPLE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. HE SAID THAT A COMPANY HAD BEEN POSTED IN OLANCHO PREVIOUSLY BUT THAT TODAY A BATTALION WAS BEING SENT TO AREA. THIS WILL MAKE A TOTAL OF 850 SOLDIERS WHO WILL BE SPREAD THROUGHOUT DEPARTMENT TO SHOW A STRONG MILITARY PRESENCE.

3. HE SAID GOH VERY CONCERNED ABOUT WHEREABOUTS OF TWO MISSING PRIESTS AND ARE AFRAID THAT IF LANDOWNERS FIND THEM THEY WILL BE SHOT AND THE GOH BLAMED. COMMISSION IS IN AREA LOOKING FOR THEM AT PRESENT. AS FAR AS BODDEN KNOWS, PRIESTS ARE HIDING OUT WITH CAMPESINOS.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT BODDEN'S COMMENTS ARE SUBSTANTIALLY CORRECT. THE SITUATION IN OLANCHO HAS RESULTED IN THE PROLIFERATION OF WILD RUMORS THAT HAVE BEEN REFLECTED IN THE MEDIA. OUR BEST EVIDENCE IS THAT SITUATION IS TENSE BUT THAT MILITARY HAVE SITUATION IN HAND.
SOWASH

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